

# Histories of the Pacific

## Fall-Winter Semester 2008

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**SUBJECT:** Survey of Pacific island peoples and cultures from early navigators and settlers to the colonial and postcolonial eras of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

**FORMAT:** Lectures and review discussion “workshops,” independent readings.

**OBJECTIVES:** 1--Basic elements: students will have a solid grasp of key figures, cultures, events, and chronologies in Pacific History.

2--Themes: students will develop an understanding of major themes in the historical analysis of Pacific History: migration and navigation of island peoples, cross-cultural contacts, social organization, ethnic diasporas, ecological and biological crises, integration in a global commercial economy, nation-building, struggles for sovereignty and identity, legacies of colonialism and tourism.

3--Professor’s investigation: the “Pacific Century” and “Pacific Way” are two ideas which gained a great deal of attention in the last few years. What do these terms mean applied not only to the present, but to the centuries-long history of the Pacific area? We will consider not only politics, but tourism, film, and literature as creators of island histories.

**REQUIREMENTS:** 20%--participation in discussions and workshops, 25%--first mid-term paper  
25%--second mid-term paper, 30%--final project

### READINGS:

*Class Reader Pacific Histories*, Collected pieces by Pacific historians, writers, and critics

Epeli Hau’ofa, *Tales of the Tikongs*

Herman Melville, *Typee*

Paul Theroux, *The Happy Isles of Oceania*

### Unit One: Tourists and Natives All

Thursday, Sep 4 One: Introduction

Our knowledge--refer to list of themes for student projects. What images and representations? What do we know about the Pacific? How has the Pacific created the West (and the East)? Themes, geography, and historiography. Why islands? Defining the Pacific and its peoples. Meanings of “The Pacific Century?”

Monday, Sep 8 Two: Mythic Realities and Ethnographic Moments

Understanding the cosmologies of ancient island peoples, traces and evidence, recreating civilizations, theories of origins and migrations, the Asian heritage, the American question. Settlement patterns, social structure, agriculture, sustenance and trade, relations to the water world, basic resources and materials.

Thursday, Sep 11 Three: Discussion and Workshop: Cabinet of Curiosities

Reading museum collections, examining the artifact (reconstructions from the Bishop Museum). Songs and tales in translation. Images from contemporary tourism. Strategic issues. Defining “The Pacific.”

Texts: Study Maps and Charts (reader)

Rob Wilson and Arif Dirlik, “Asia-Pacific as Space of Cultural Production” (reader)

Epeli Hau’ofa, from *Tales of the Tikongs* (stories, pp. 1-25)

Paul Theroux, from *The Happy Isles of Oceania* (ch. 1 and 6)

Trobriand Oral Tradition: “The Story of Kasabwaybwayreta and Gumakarakedakeda” (reader)

### Unit Two: Civilization Without a Center: Navigation and Diaspora

Monday, Sep 15 Four: Ancient Migrations

The age of the navigators, Polynesian voyages to new worlds, modern recreations of ancient seafaring, legacies and questions.

Thursday, Sep 18 Five: Survival Systems

Exchange Networks, Internal Struggles, riddles of kinship and wealth, alternatives to commerce and

accumulation, societies of scarcity or plenitude? Distinctions in Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia, warfare and loyalty, patterns of rule and change, inter-island cultural contact and influences. Understanding diversity from *within* Oceania. Reconsidering the Southeast Asian roots and legacies.

Monday, Sep 22 Six: Discussion and Workshop: Search for Origins  
Debate: Arguments from anthropology, structural and otherwise. Heyerdahl, Easter Island, etc. Looking at outrigger canoes and the maritime imagination. Film: *PCC's Polynesian Odyssey*

Texts:

Albert Wendt, "Inside Us the Dead" (reader)  
Ben Finney, "Voyaging Into Polynesia's Past," (reader)  
Greg Denning, "Space and Time" (reader)  
Epeli Hau'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands" (reader)  
Theophil Saret Reuney, trans., "The Pulling of Olap's Canoe," (reader)

### **Unit Three: Encounters in the Contact Zone**

Thurs, Sep 25 Seven: Potentates and Pirates  
Arabic and Indian influences through Melakka. The coastal Sultanates after Srivijaya. Tales and realities of piracy and power in the Sulu Sea. Connections of trade and faith through island Southeast Asia and the Indonesian/ Irian Jaya/ Papua New Guinea waterways.

Monday, Sep 29 Eight: Explorers and Tributaries  
When China ruled the seas: the voyages and legacies of Zheng He and the Treasure Fleets. Coming of the Europeans, early contacts with seafarers, beachcombers, traders, castaways, benefits and dangers. The meanings of first meetings. Cultures and practices taken from and "introduced" from Asia.

Thursday, Oct 2 Nine: Noble Savages and Fatal Impacts?  
The role of the people between the continents, Islanders on European ships, theories of decline and degeneration, legacies of disease and "ecological imperialism." The background of the West in India, China, and Japan. Comparative questions. The age of European exploration, notes on Magellan, Cook, La Perouse, Bougainville, their legacies and reports, the shaping of the Pacific in Early Modern Europe.

Texts:

Herman Melville: *Typee* (read generally, but concentrate on chapters 1-2, 8-10, 17-20)  
M. Consuelo Leon W. "Foundations of the American Image of the Pacific" (reader)  
I.C. Campbell: "Culture Contact and Polynesian Identity in the European Age" (reader)  
Louise Levathes, "When China Ruled the Seas" (reader)

### **Unit Four: Disputed Legacies**

Monday, Oct 6 Ten: Religion Ignoble Savages  
Missionization and new cosmologies, alliances of religion, power, and knowledge, competition of the faiths, role of the monarchies.

Thursday, Oct 9 Eleven: Power and Ideology  
New intersections of science, religion, and capitalism. The seductions of science; racial theory, natural history, Darwin's voyage. Reflect on "stone-age economics," "the great transformation" and "the survival of the fittest." Doing a map of capitalist and kinship belief systems. What would the globe look like?

Monday, Oct 13 Twelve: Discussion and Workshop: Contested Narratives  
Meanings of Captain Cook or the Mutiny on the Bounty. Western views: Flaherty's and Murnau's *Tabu*, or multiple versions of *Bounty*. Sahlins or Obeyeskere? Native gods or European heroes? Cannibal terror or New Eden?

Thursday, Oct 16 Thirteen: Film *Mutin(ies) on the Bounty* and *Tabu*

Texts:

Continue *Typee*, (read generally, but concentrate on chapters 26-30)  
Vilsoni Herenkio, "Indigenous Knowledge and Academic Imperialism" (reader)  
K. R. Howe: "The Making of Cook's Death--Marshall Sahlins and Gananath Obeyeskere" (reader)

### **Unit Five: Varieties of Imperialism**

Monday, Oct 20 Fourteen: The Colonial Age

British settler colonies; strategic interventions. The French presence in Tahiti, struggles with the missions and the British, French strategy, cultural representations from Pierre Loti to Paul Gauguin, gunboat diplomacy, reimagining and reinscribing “the romance of the South Seas.”

Thursday, Oct 23 Fifteen: Polynesian Commerce and Melanesian Shores

Understanding commercial exchange, new commodities, treaties and trade in Oceania and Asia, reflections on the “Pacific Rim” of the nineteenth century. Reflections on theories of “possession” and rule. Exploitations of the sandalwood trade, searching for the peoples of New Guinea, the project of the penal colony in Australia and New Caledonia, adaptation and confrontation with and between Aborigines, Maoris, and Kanaks. Film: *Utu*

Texts:

Haunani-Kay Trask, “Hawai‘i: Colonization and De-Colonization” (reader)

Donald Denoon, ed., “Colonial Administration and the Invention of the Native,” (reader)

Epeli Hau‘ofa, *Tales of the Tikongs* (stories, pp. 27-42)

Paul Theroux, from *The Happy Isles of Oceania* (ch. 10)

### **Unit Six: Whose Anthropologies?**

Monday, Oct 27 Sixteen: Haole Aloha

The case of Hawaii, a plantation economy and planter aristocracy, the promise and perils of immigration from China, Japan, Portugal, the Philippines, dividing the land, the English and the Americans, Polynesian persistence.

Thursday, Oct 30 Seventeen: Narrations of Everyday Life

Planters, laborers, prisoners, writers and priests. National and regional differences. Modernity and acculturation. Being Margaret Mead or Malinowski: the historian as anthropologist--study of the other or self critique?

Monday, Nov 3 Eighteen: Discussion and Workshop: Ethnographic Reality

Film *Margaret Mead: An Observer Observed*, or *Cannibal Tours* --premises and assumptions of ethnographic representation.

Texts:

Margaret Mead, from *Coming of Age in Samoa* (reader)

Bronislaw Malinowski, “A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term” (reader)

Ronald Takaki, from *Strangers From a Different Shore* (reader)

### **Unit Seven: Theater of Conflict--Development and Decolonization**

Thursday, Nov 6 Nineteen: Turbulent Seas and the Cold Ocean

Island peoples in the age of Pacific warfare, alliances and loyalties, the coming of the Japanese, Americans, Europeans, cooperation and resistance, the German territories, military volunteerism and conscription. World War II as the Pacific War--Pearl Harbor, Iwo Jima, “island-hopping,” Guadalcanal, the Philippines, battles of the Solomons, of Midway; whose narratives? Islands as trust territories, mandates and strategic bases in the Cold War; the reorganized map of the Pacific. The effects of Soviet-American tensions, the links to crises in China, Taiwan, Korea, and Vietnam.

Monday, Nov 10 Twenty: Decolonization and Development

The places of Indonesia and Malaysia. Struggles in Vanuatu and Fiji, upheavals in New Caledonia; independence or CO-dependence? Who votes and what are the new island peoples? The power of the ex-colonials, indigenous agitation. Importance of Asian, especially Japanese investment and the new shape of political economy.

Thursday, Nov 13 Twenty One: Cargo Cult

The new cultural politics, postwar rebellions and repressions, grand scale tourism and advertising representation, the last gasp of “primitivism” for islanders and anthropologists of the postwar era.

Monday, Nov 17 Twenty Two: Film

*Trobriand Cricket* and *Radio Bikini* or *Half Life* or *Angels of War*

Texts:

Geoff White and Lamont Lindstrom: “War Stories: Cultural Encounters in the Pacific War” (reader)

Lamont Lindstrom, “What Happened to Cargo Cults?” (reader)

Margaret Jolly, "Woman-Nation-State in Vanuatu" (reader)  
Grace Mera Molisa, "Colonised People" (reader)

### **Unit Eight: The Pacific Century**

Tuesday, Nov 20 Twenty Three: An Oceanic World  
Islanders throughout the world, Asian labor and merchant classes, European and American capital, poverty and displacement, opportunity and exploitation. Ethnic and economic hierarchies in the islands, emitters in European, American, and Asian metropolis.

Monday, Nov 24 Twenty Four: Critical Mass  
Contemporary issues of ecology, resource zones, and nuclear testing, the increasing impact of tourism, the Pacific as theme park, as aqua-farm, and trading region or dumping ground. From Greenpeace to tuna boats and the whaling industry, to Caledonian nickel and Hawaiian produce. Paradise and the atomic age.

Texts:

Eveli Hau'ofa, *Tales of the Tikongs* (stories on pp. 18-26, 48-67)  
Teresia Teawia, "Bikinis and Other s/Pacific n/Oceans" (reader)  
Paul Theroux, From *The Happy Isles of Oceania*, Chapters 16-18, Samoa, Western Samoa, Tahiti

### **Unit Nine: Our Sea of Islands**

Tuesday, Nov 25 Twenty Five: A Pacific Way?  
The search for an island identity; the fracturing and syncretism of ethnicity and culture, new voices and visions in literature and the arts, and in politics and history. The Pacific as creator of film and writing, works by Island writers and scholars.

Monday, Dec 1 Twenty Six: Discussion and Workshop: Predicaments of Culture  
Examine pop culture and representation--tourism, film, etc. See list of student projects. Presenting and representing sovereignty?

Thursday, Dec 4 Twenty Seven: Contemporary concerns. Film and representation.  
From *Once Were Warriors* or *The Pacific Century* or *Black Harvest* or *Cannibal Tours*

Monday, Dec 8 Twenty Eight: Final project review and time for optional student presentations.

Texts:

Vicente Diaz, "Simply Chamorro: Tales of Demise and Survival" (reader)  
Collected pieces by Haunani-Kay Trask, Joseph P. Balaz, Subramani, (reader, original text pages 171-185)  
Selections from *Nuanua*

### **Appendix: Examples of Student Project Ideas (Due on or before Final Exam Date)**

National Liberation Movements (New Caledonia, Fiji) / Paradise (European and American Literature)  
Pacific War (Veterans and Remembrances) / Trust Territories (Administration and Peace Corps)  
Tourism (Postcards and Tours) / Cannibalism / Headhunting (Ethnology and Popular imagery)  
Kinship Relations, Rites (Family and Individuality) / Literature and Poetry (New Voices, Writing Back)  
Sexuality, Power, Liberation, Prostitution, (Imaginary and Realities)  
Gods and Europeans (Sahlins and Obeyeskere) / Nuclear Testing (French Colonialism)  
The Arts (Maori, Guinean, Gauguin and others) / Society of Abundance (Unspoiled management)  
Darwinism (Natural History and Selection, Fatal Impacts) / Ecology, Flora and Fauna (Island ecologies)  
Easter Island (Mysteries and Totems) / Navigation (Theories of Arrival, Kon-Tiki, Houk'lea)  
Dance and Music (Hula, Ukelele, rhythm) / Island-inspired Fashion (Muumuu, sarong, aloha shirt, bikini)  
Body Cults (Tattooing and Piercing) / Cuisine (Luau, mixed plate, Spam)  
Medicine (Tropical disease and treatment, traditional cures) / Sports (Surfing, diving)  
Christianity and Religion (Missionaries and Cults)  
Colonialism (Administration and Ideology) / Kapu, Tabu, Mana (Universes of Belief)  
The Museum (Representing Cultures) / Games (Traditional and Educational)  
Pop Culture (Contemporary Expressions and Challenges) / Television (Hawaii, Fantasy, Survivor)  
Racial Typing and Anthropology (Polynesians, Melanesians, Micronesians) / Cargo Cult (Cultural Collision)  
The Pacific Rim I (The Asian Heritage) / The Pacific Rim II (Legacies of the Americas)

Pacific Century (Economic Development and Business) / Film (Documentaries and Dramas)